

NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Safety

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Troopers to Target Aggressive Driving During Fourth *DPS Urges Independence Day Holiday Safety*

All available troopers will be on duty during the Fourth of July holiday travel period, enforcing traffic laws, assisting motorists, and serving as visible reminders to drive safely. In addition to routine patrol operations, enforcement plans include license and sobriety checkpoints, saturation and line patrols, and operation of laser speed detection devices (LIDAR) from stationary vantage points.

According to Public Safety Director Col. J. Christopher Murphy, troopers will especially target those violations that frequently factor in crashes and generally constitute “aggressive” driving when two or more are combined – unsafe lane changes, following too closely, failing to yield the right of way and speeding. Troopers, including special “Task Force Zero” DUI enforcement teams, also will actively work to identify and apprehend drivers impaired by alcohol or drugs during the period.

Murphy cited the value of highly visible, intensive enforcement in reducing motor vehicle crashes, deaths and injuries. “Through Take Back Our Highways, other safety initiatives, aggressive enforcement and heightened trooper presence, we have increased safety on Alabama’s roadways. Crashes, injuries and fatalities were down across the board in 2007; and so far this year, rural traffic deaths have declined 78 compared with the same period last year,” he said.

Murphy said Alabama is committed to sustaining gains in highway and traffic safety during the upcoming holiday and throughout the year. “The goal of troopers and our partners in local law enforcement is to save lives and safeguard all motorists on Alabama’s roadways,” he said.

Overtime grants administered through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Alabama Department of Transportation will support increased patrols during the Fourth of July travel period.

Murphy urged motorists to make safety a priority and to buckle up on every trip. He also addressed officer safety, issuing a reminder about the state’s “move-over” law. This law requires motorists on multi-lane roadways to move over one lane when passing stationary, roadside emergency vehicles with emergency lights activated. When motorists may not safely move over, the law mandates slowing down to a safe speed.

The official Independence Day 78-hour travel period begins at 6 p.m. Thursday, July 3, and ends at midnight Sunday, July 6. Last year there were nine traffic fatalities – eight vehicle occupants and one pedestrian – in Alabama during a 30-hour Fourth of July holiday period. More than half of those deaths — a total of five — involved alcohol, and 75 percent — or six — of the eight vehicle occupants killed were not using safety belts.

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